United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Arizona Zone Entomology & Pathology | 2500 S. Pineknoll Dr. Flagstaff, AZ 86001

File Code: 3400 **Date:** May 9, 1997
Route To: 1920/2400

Subject: Functional Assistance to the Peaks Ranger District Concerning Bark Beetle Risk Associated with the Hochderffer Fire within the Whitehorse Salavage Area

To: Sharon Metzler

On April 30 Alvin Brown contacted me concerning evaluation of bark beetle risk in association with the Hochderffer Fire within the proposed Whitehorse Salvage Area. Since the alternatives for the Whitehorse sale are a subset of those we previously evaluated in our 3400 letter dated October 22,1996 (Functional assistance to the Peaks Ranger District concerning bark beetle risk associated with the Horseshoe and Hochderffer fires within the Kendrick, Saddle, and Toe Salvage) I suggest that you reference the discussion in that letter. Many of the details discussed in that letter are still relevant now. As mentioned in that letter, one of my main concerns was that bark beetle populations have been increasing due to the extremely severe drought during 1995-1996. Some substantial areas of ponderosa and pinyon pine mortality have developed on the forest, particularly out in the Cinder Hills area and south of Twin Arrows. Because of this situation, I feel the risk of elevated mortality due to bark beetles within the burned areas is higher than we would normally expect. The same is true for adjacent areas. This risk should decline over time if moisture levels remain around normal. However if the drought returns this summer, beetle populations will probably continue to increase and could move into areas affected by last years fires. Within the burns, trees most susceptible to attack would include those that survived the fire but sustained serious injuries, particularly scorch levels greater than 75 percent. As mentioned in the earlier letters, beetle populations within burned areas typically peak about 2 years after the fire.

We do plan to monitor bark beetle activity within the burn area and in adjacent areas via ground and aerial surveys. We will keep you updated concerning our findings. If you have any questions feel free to give me a call at 527-1595.

/s/ Jill L. Wilson

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